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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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50X1-HUM

COUNTRY North Korea

SUBJECT The North Korean Air Force

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REPORT

DATE DISTR. 28 March 1961

NO. PAGES 1

REFERENCES RD

DATE OF INFO.

PLACE & DATE ACQ.

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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

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Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/10/19 : CIA-RDP80T00246A058100450001-7

Date of Report:
December 1960

Subject: Grading and Identification of NK Pilots and Ground Men.

The North Korean Air Force servicemen pilots and telegraph operators are classified into grades but ground crewmen are classified by position.

1. Grading, Combat Capacity, and Positions of Pilots:

A. Grading:

Flying officer grade I

Flying officer Grade II

Flying officer Grade III

Non-grade flying officer.

This grading of flying officers was originated with the Air Force Headquarters in 1956 and was enforced from the same year upon the approval of the Ministry of National Defense. The enforcement of the grading system is effected by written orders issued from the Commander of the Air Force. Newly commissioned flying officers who were graduated from the military officers school become non-grade flying officers. It was rumored among flying officers that to flying officers Grade III and higher wing ensigns would be issued in the future, but the date was unknown. About the end of June 1960, however, a prize contest was advertised among all the pilots for suitable wing designs. Promotion in grade was effected only as a result of definite written, oral, and flying examinations conducted by the Air Force Headquarters. Definite amounts of allowances for grades are issued to flying officers [redacted] regardless of their positions. 50X1-HUM

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[redacted]

B. Qualifications by Grade:

1) Non-Grade Flying Officer:

Non-grade flying officer is the lowest grade which is given to junior flying officers who were newly graduated from the military officers school and who have not yet attained the capacity to perform all types of air battles under common weather conditions during the daytime. Regular training period to give this capacity is fixed as two years but since the promotion in grade is effected only when one passes the examinations, common flying officers may have grades and officers on the level of, for instance, deputy battalion commander may not have grade, but such officers are very few. An excellent flying officer may remain without grade regardless of the length of his service if he is weak in the theoretical field (such officers are mostly weak in communication codes). Flying officers without grade can be found among pilots of MIG-17 PF's who are capable of nighttime air battle but their numerical ratio is unknown. To non-grade flying officers no grade allowance is paid, but when they fly under bad weather conditions during daytime or during nighttime, flying allowance is paid.

2) Flying Officer Grade III:

Flying officer grade III, the lowest grade among flying officers with grades, requires the capacity to perform any type of air battle under common weather conditions during the daytime. All the flying officers on the level of battalion commander and higher have grades and a very few common pilots of MIG-17 PF's have grade III. As of August 1960 intensive training both in flying art and theories was being conducted with the target of passing the examinations for flying officer grade I. About 30 to 40 percent of common flying officers flying MIG-15 BIS's and MIG-17's for daytime air battle had grade III and most officers on the level of company commander had the same grade.

3) Flying Officer Grade II:

Flying officer grade II requires the capacity both in theories and flying art to perform all types of air battle under bad weather conditions (with clouds (except cumulo nimbi) down to 300 meters altitude) during daytime and common weather conditions at night. Most flying officers of the 24 Reconnaissance Regiment and the 36th Bomber Regiment, most pilots of MIG-17 PF's, and most of those on the level of battalion commander and higher of the 59th Regiment of the 1st NKAF Division and the 58th Regiment of the 2nd NKAF Division and the 61st Regiment of the 3rd NKAF Division all of which are conducting night training using MIG-17's have the capacity required for grade II, but as of August 1960 very

few had the grade because it was only from early 1960 that night training using MIG-17's SIS's and flying officers on the level of company commander had grade II. But all the air force commanders on the level of flying deputy regiment commander and higher had grade II.

4) Flying Officer Grade I:

Flying officer grade I requires the capacity both in theories and flying art to perform air battles under all weather conditions. As of August 1960 there was no flying officer that had this grade, but most flying officers of the 36th Bomber Regiment and the 24th Reconnaissance Regiment and part of the MIG-17 PF pilots had the capacity required for grade I. Up until August 1960 no examinations for promotion to grade I was held but the reasons are unknown.

2. Grading of Radio Operators:

Ground radio operators are divided into

Radio Operator Grade I,

Radio Operator Grade II,

and Radio Operator Grade III.

The grades are given when operators pass examinations conducted by the NKAF Headquarters but further information is unavailable.

3. Positions of Ground Crew: (See Sketch Attachment No. 1-1).

The technical level of ground crewmen can generally be estimated by position but the technical levels of battalion engineers and higher are much the same. There are the following positions for ground crewmen:

A. Maintenance Man:

The main responsibility of the maintenance man is fatigue (including cleaning up) necessary for good maintenance of aircraft assigned to the flying crew. His rank, both table of organization wise and in reality, is private.

B. Engine Man:

The engine man is a member of the maintenance team for aircraft assigned to the flying team and helps the assistant engineer but has no direct responsibility for the maintenance. T/O wise, his rank is sergeant but currently engine men's ranks are either sergeant or junior sergeant. After about two years' service a maintenance man may be promoted to an engine man.

C. Assistant Engineer:

The assistant engineer is directly responsible for maintenance of the aircraft assigned to the flying team and has the capacity for overall maintenance of aircraft. T/O wise, his rank is lieutenant and currently most assistant engineers are lieutenants and a very few are junior lieutenants. This is the position to which aircraft maintenance officers newly commissioned after graduation are assigned.

D. Company Assistant Engineer:

The company assistant engineer is responsible for overall maintenance of the aircraft assigned to the company. T/O wise, his rank is senior lieutenant but currently about 50 percent of the company assistant engineers are lieutenants and the other 50 percent are senior lieutenants. Company assistant engineers are under the direct control of the commander of the NAAF and their promotion is effected depending upon their work performance (no examinations) regardless of length of service.

E. Battalion Engineers

The aircraft maintenance officers of the battalion level and higher are called engineers. T/O wise, their rank is captain but in reality they are either captains or senior lieutenants. Like company assistant engineers, battalion engineers are under the direct control of the commander of the NAAF and their promotion is effected mostly depending upon their work performance. But company assistant engineers are promoted to battalion engineers when they finish one year short course of the air force officers school. The battalion engineer is responsible for overall maintenance of the aircraft assigned to the battalion.

F. Regiment Engineer:

Regiment Engineers are under the direct control of the Ministry of National Defense and their promotions are effected depending upon their work performance. T/O wise, their rank is lieutenant colonel but currently most regiment engineers are majors. The regiment engineer is responsible for overall maintenance of the aircraft assigned to the regiment and is authorized to make decisions as to sending regiment aircraft to the division repair station for repair.

G. Division Engineer:

T/O wise, the division engineer is a colonel but currently a very small number of division engineers are lieutenant colonels. The division engineer is responsible for management of maintenance and repair (at the division repair station) of all the aircraft of the division. He is also responsible for air transport of aircraft for major repair (at the aircraft repair station located in Sinuiju) in accordance with instructions from the NAAF Headquarters.

II. Engineer Deputy Commander:

The rank both T/O wise and in reality of the Engineer Deputy Commander is major general. As of August 1960 this was YI Yong-su (nta) who had been in the position for a long period of time. He is responsible for management of all the aircraft of the NKAF and training of aircraft maintenance personnel.

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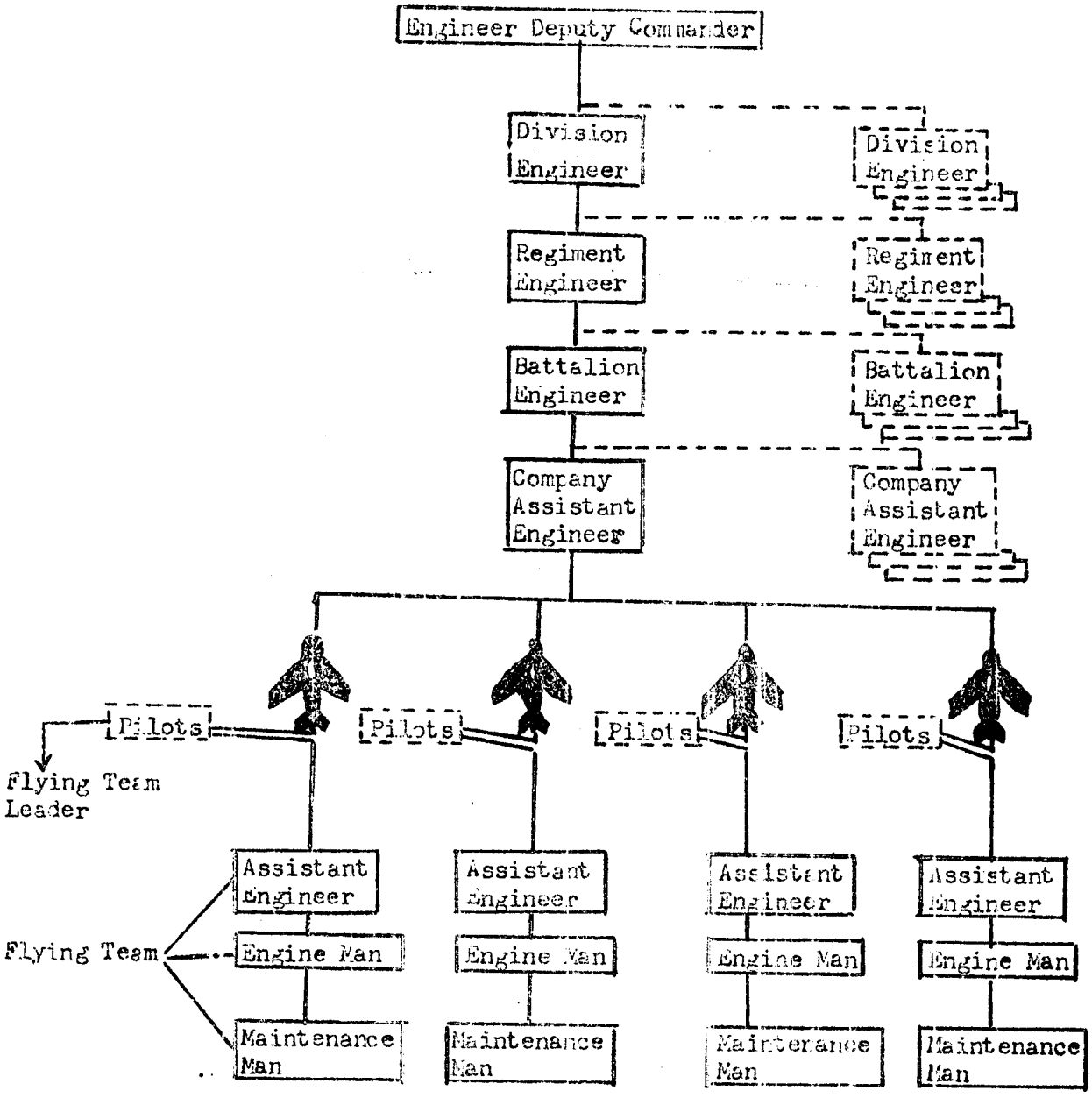
Sketch Attachment No. 1-1:



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